



## Energy and Environmental Affairs

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CHARLIE BAKER  
GOVERNOR

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KARYN POLITO  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

MATTHEW A. BEATON  
SECRETARY

LEO ROY  
DCR COMMISSIONER

### Media Contact

Mark Steffen

[Mark.A.Steffen@state.ma.us](mailto:Mark.A.Steffen@state.ma.us)

617-360-1715

## DCR Approves 2017 Deer Management Plan for Blue Hills State Reservation

Today, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife), has approved the [2017 Deer Management Plan](#) for the Blue Hills State Reservation. The 2017 plan features two phases of hunting in the Blue Hills including permitted archery hunting in limited areas of the Reservation during the month of November and a four-day shotgun hunt in late November/early December. Under legislative mandate, the DCR is required to implement a management plan where deer overpopulation is negatively impacting forests, water resources, or plant growth on department owned land. [The Blue Hills Deer Management Program](#) utilizes controlled and permitted hunting as part of DCR's efforts to manage the high deer densities within the state reservation. Benefits of managing the deer herd within the Blue Hills Reservation include:

- The promotion of tree and plant regeneration, including rare plants;
- The sustainability of species diversity; and,
- The diminished risk of forest wildfires due to the growth of plant life.

DCR safely and successfully conducted controlled hunts in the Blue Hills Reservation in 2015 and 2016. To continue these efforts, DCR and MassWildlife will implement controlled hunting in the Blue Hills for 2017. Phase 1 of this year's plan features limited archery hunting in designated areas of the Reservation on Mondays through Thursdays starting on November 6, 2017, through November 22, 2017. Licensed hunters will be required to submit an application and DCR will utilize a random lottery to select 75 hunters to receive permits.

Phase 2 of the plan includes four days of shotgun hunting on the following days; Week 1: Tuesday, November 28, 2017, and Thursday, November 30, 2017; and, Week 2: Tuesday, December 5, 2017, and Thursday, December 7, 2017. Licensed hunters will be required to submit an application and DCR will utilize a random lottery to select a total of 262 hunters. Half of these hunters (131) will be permitted to hunt during the first two days and the other half will be permitted to hunt during the second two days.

The use of licensed public hunters in managing deer populations is one of the most widely used management methods employed throughout the United States. In Massachusetts, it is the primary management tool supported by MassWildlife and has been shown to be successful in addressing situations involving deer overabundance and vegetation over-browse. The Quabbin Reservoir controlled deer hunt is the most notable example. In addition, DCR manages thousands of acres of forest and parkland across the Commonwealth where licensed hunters are allowed to hunt game during the appropriate seasons.

After developing and issuing a draft 2017 plan that included several enhancements to last year's management plan, DCR and MassWildlife hosted a public meeting at Milton High School and solicited written public comment on the draft. Following the public input process, the northwestern boundary of the Wampatuck management zone was modified to increase no-hunting buffer areas.

Hunters interested in applying for archery and/or shotgun hunting should click on the following link: [Blue Hills Deer Management Program](#) to review application instructions as well as to complete and submit an application. Selected hunters will be required to attend a mandatory hunter orientation session to review the guidelines for deer hunting in the Blue Hills. Also contained on the management webpage is the [2016 Program Overview & the 2017 Deer Survey Report](#).

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Leo Roy, the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us).

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*251 Causeway Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02114 — (617) 626-1250 office / (617) 626-1351 (fax)*